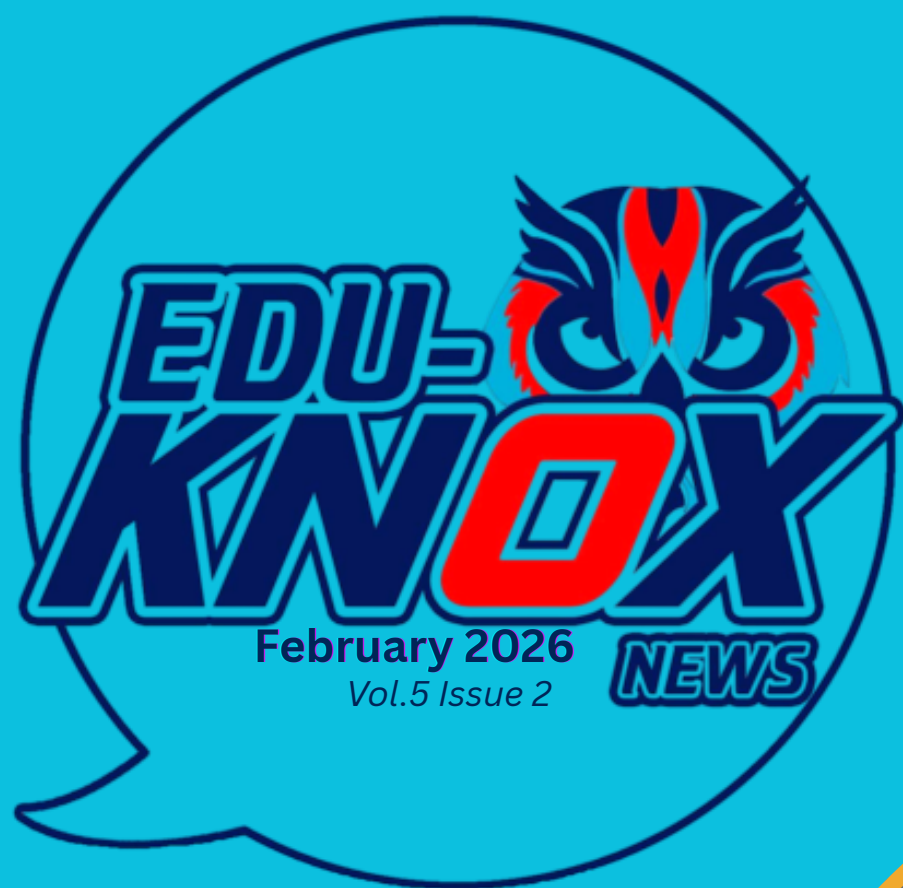


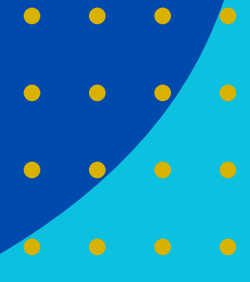
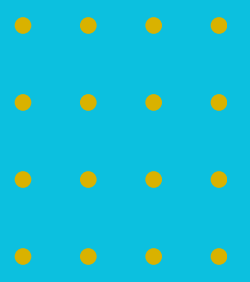


Special Feature
February is Heart Health Awareness Month

Heart Health

Contributed by Nurse Anglin
Department of Health & Wellness

Learn More ▶



Introduction



Heart Disease

Heart disease or cardiovascular disease (CVD) is an umbrella term for any disorder that affects the structure and functions of the heart and circulation.

This includes diseases of the arteries (coronary heart disease, or CHD), diseases of the heart muscle or diseases of the heart valves.



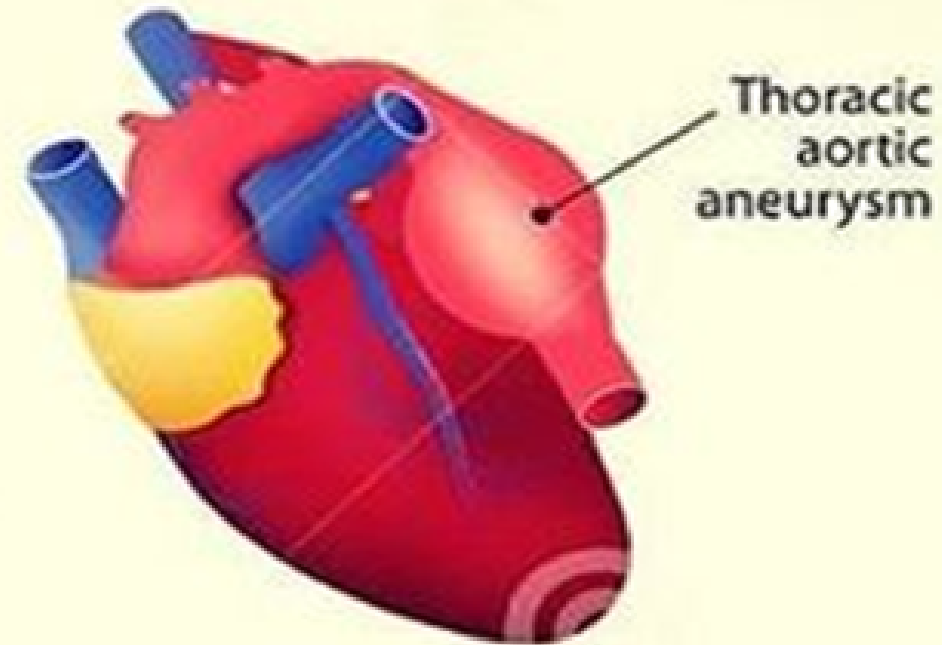
Types of heart disease

Normal valve
(closed)

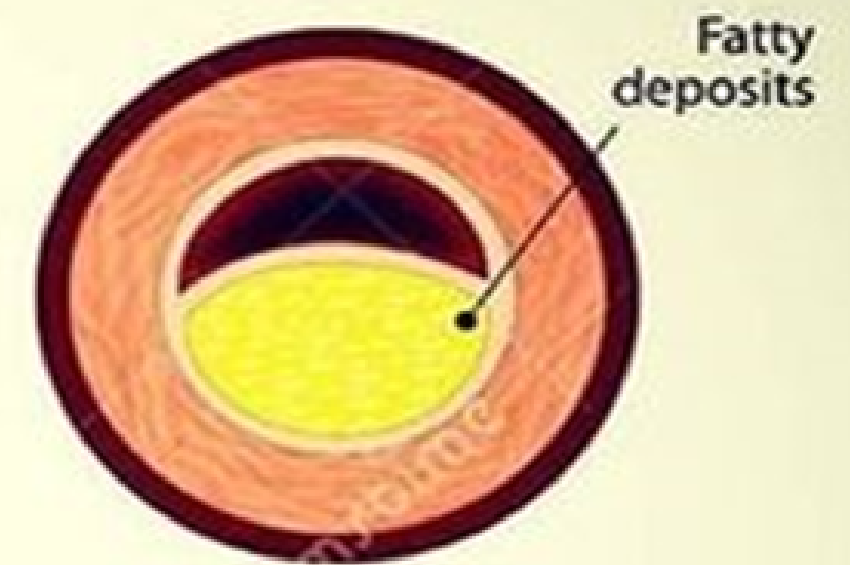


Valve disease

Valve stenosis
(closed)



Aneurysm



Coronary artery disease



Cardiac arrhythmia



Heart failure

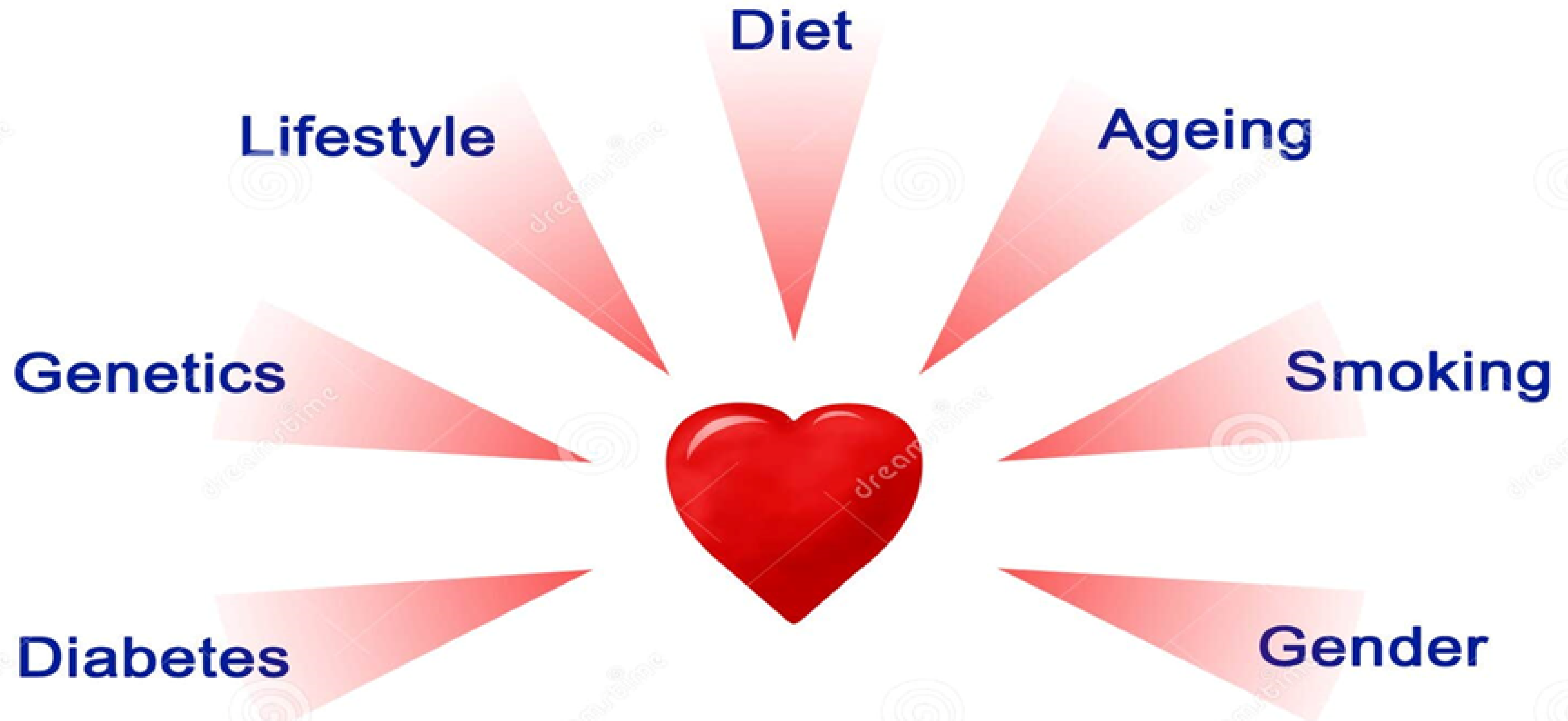


Cardiomyopathy



Pericarditis

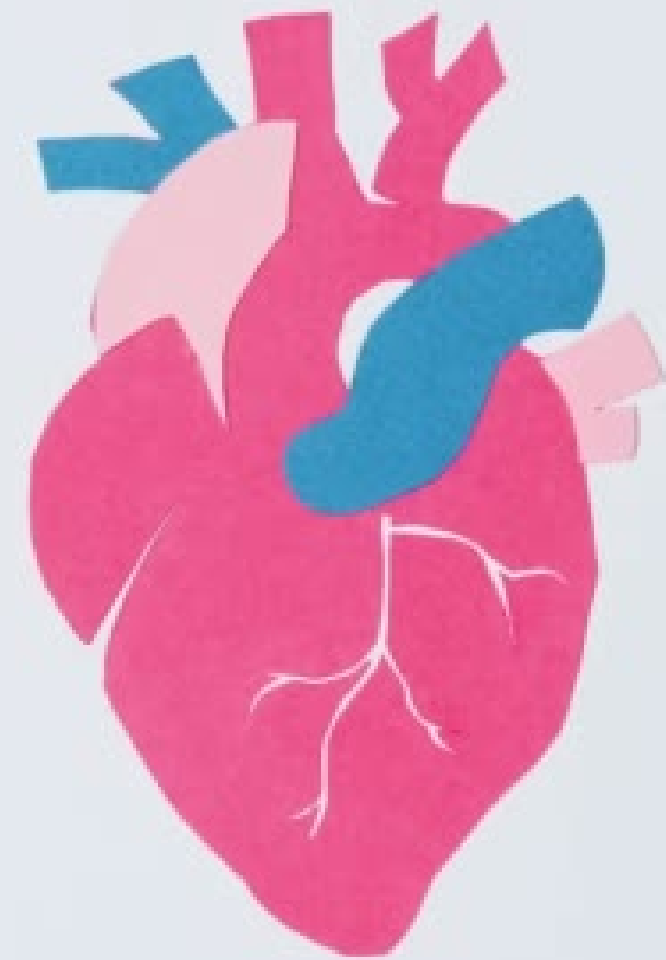
Causes of Heart Disease



Causes

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) has many root causes: for example, high blood pressure (hypertension) damages the heart muscle so it becomes too weak or stiff to effectively pump blood. You could also have a faulty heart valve or congenital heart defects (you were born with them).

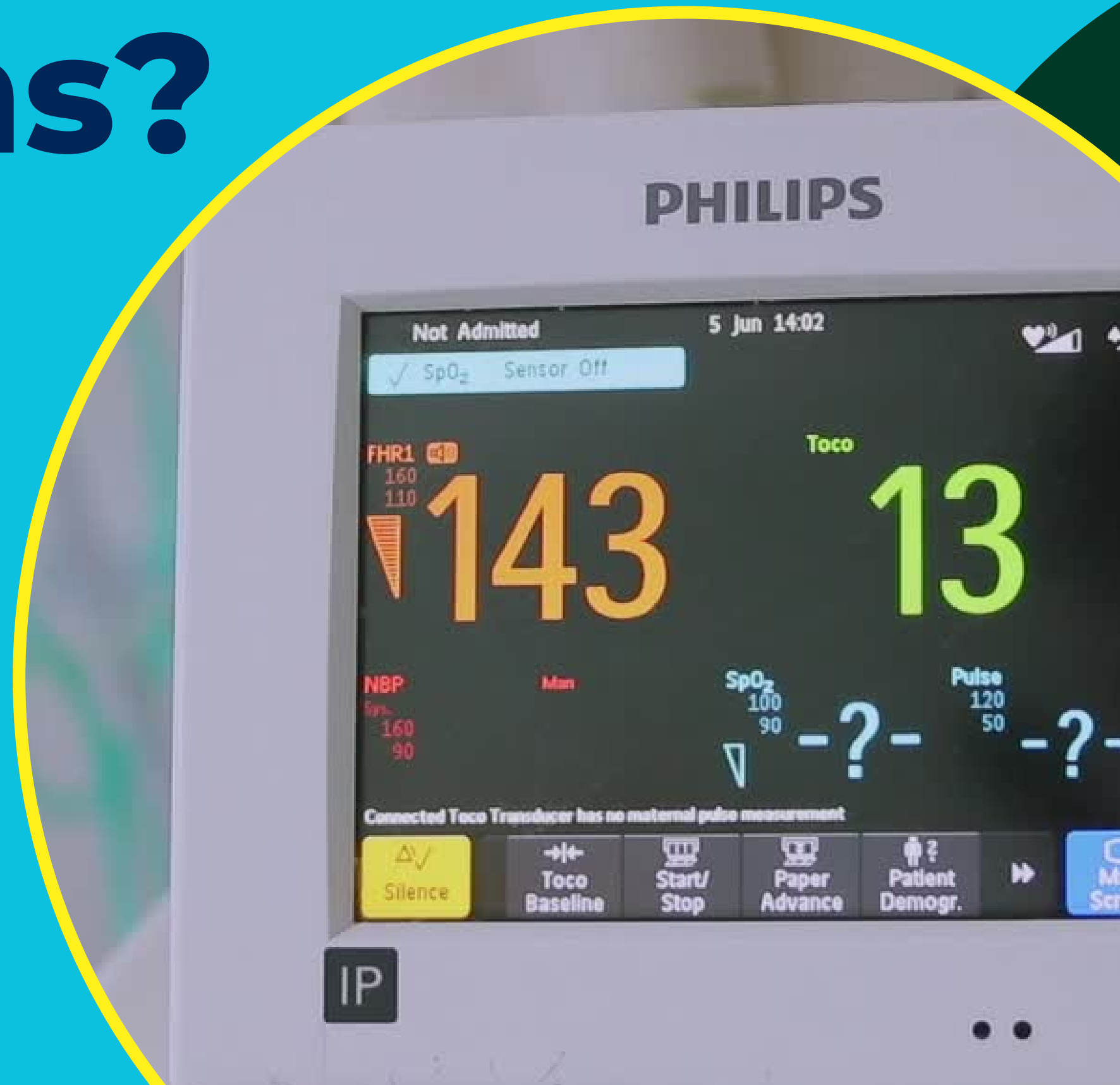
The most common symptoms of coronary heart disease are chest pain and a heart attack. You can also experience other symptoms, such as heart palpitations and unusual breathlessness. However, in some cases, people may not have any symptoms before they are diagnosed.



What are its symptoms?

Heart failure symptoms vary, depending on what type of heart disease you have. However, they may have similar warning signs. These include:

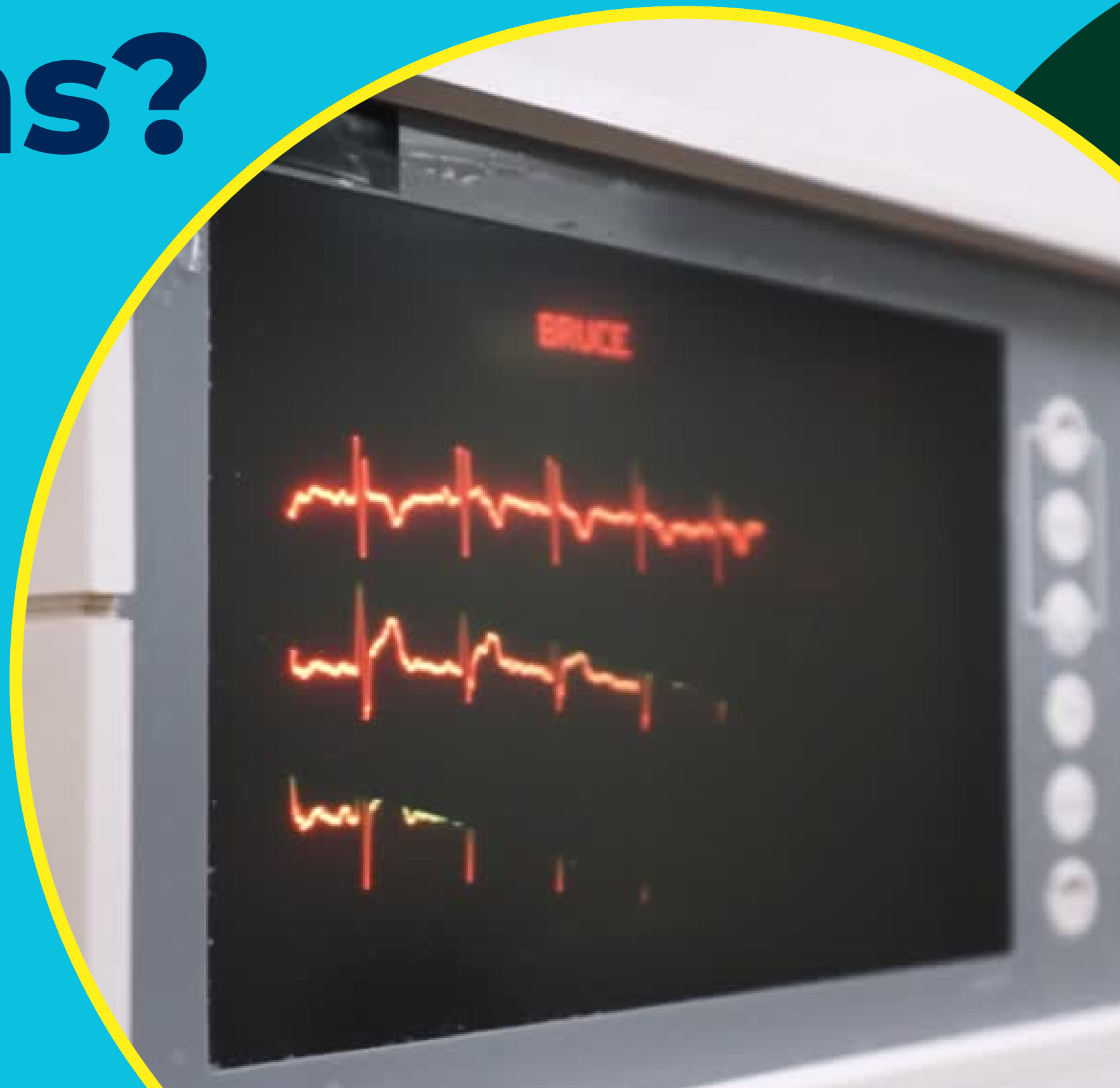
- Shortness of breath, during effort and when lying at rest
- Palpitations (irregular heartbeats)
- A faster heartbeat
- Weakness or dizziness
- Nausea
- Sweating
- Fatigue and weakness
- Swelling in your legs, ankles and feet.



What are its symptoms?

In the case of chronic coronary artery disease, be on the alert for the following symptoms and seek emergency treatment:

- Heavy pressure, tightness, crushing pain or unusual discomfort in the centre of the chest. This may feel like indigestion, spread to your shoulders, arms, neck or jaw and/or last for more than 15 minutes. It may stop or weaken and then return.
- Rapid, weak pulse
- Severe weakness
- Sudden shortness of breath
- Coughing up of foamy, pink mucous.





How is it diagnosed?

To make a heart disease diagnosis, your doctor will take note of your medical and family histories. They will conduct a physical exam and consider your results from a myriad tests and procedures.

How is it diagnosed?

No single test can diagnose heart disease. There are a number of different ones, depending on what condition your doctor thinks you might have. These include:

- An electrocardiogram (ECG)
- Exercise stress tests
- X-rays
- Echocardiogram
- Blood tests
- Coronary angiography
- Radionuclide tests
- MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scans.

Heart disease treatment is easier with early detection, so talk to your doctor about your concerns.



What are your treatment options?

Treatment options depend on the type, cause, symptoms and severity of the identified heart disease. They can include anything from a range of drugs to major surgery. For instance, if you have an infection in one of the heart valves, you will probably be prescribed antibiotics.

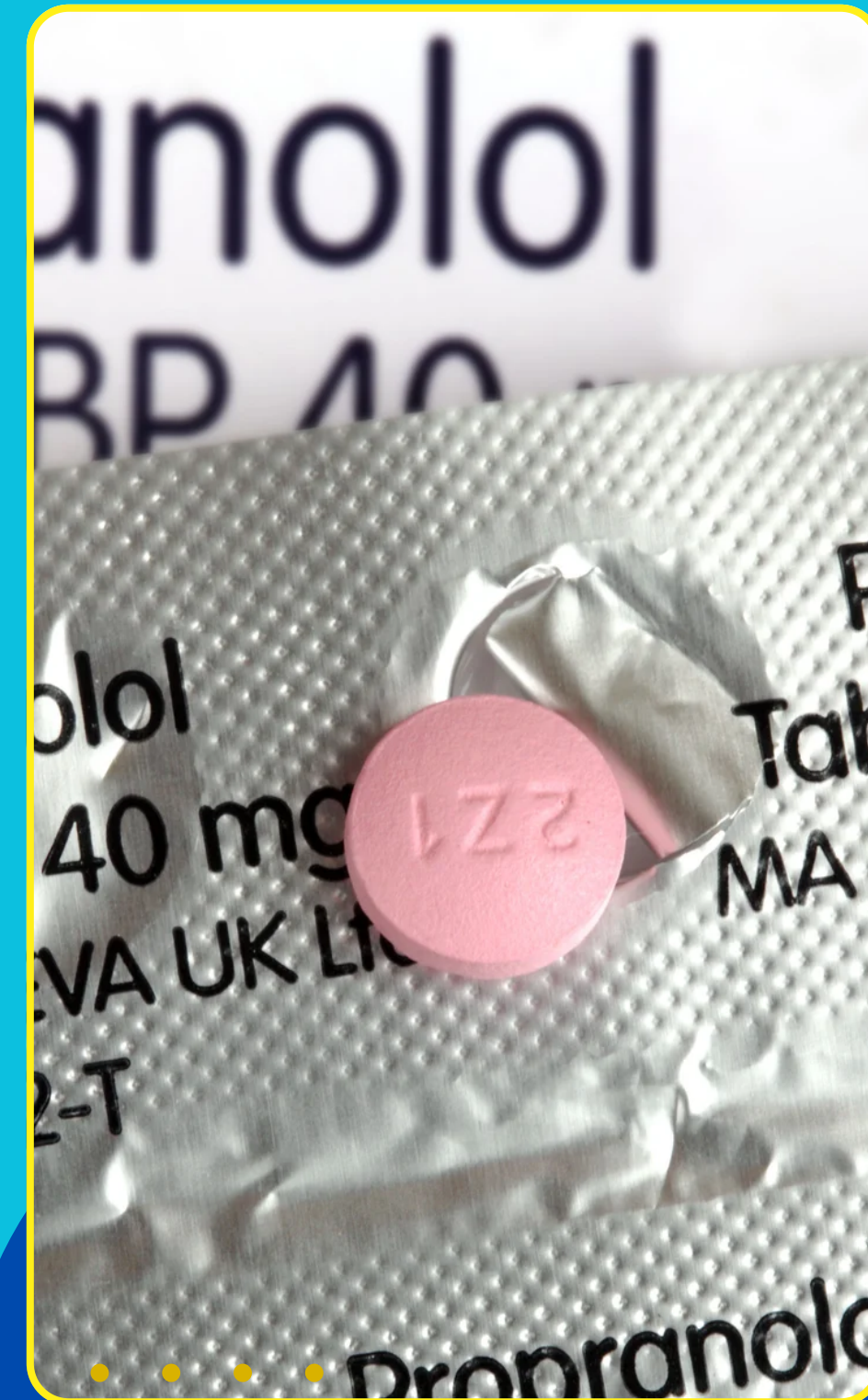
Generally, treatment for heart disease includes:

- Lifestyle changes: These include eating a low-fat and low-sodium diet, getting at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise on most days of the week, quitting smoking, and limiting alcohol intake.



What are your treatment options?

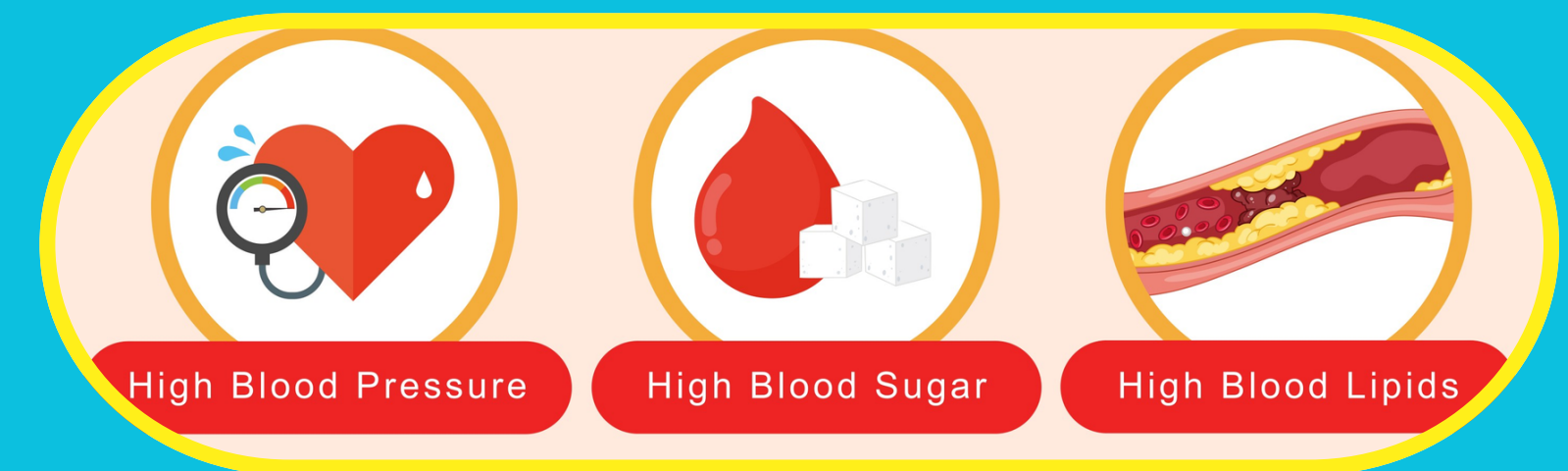
- Medication: If lifestyle changes alone are not enough, your doctor may prescribe medications like beta blockers to control your heart disease. The type of medication will depend on the type of heart disease and usually include a combination of medications.
- Specific procedures or surgery: This will depend on the type of heart disease and the extent of the damage to your heart. They can include bypass surgery, heart valve repair or a heart transplant, or devices such as a pacemaker.

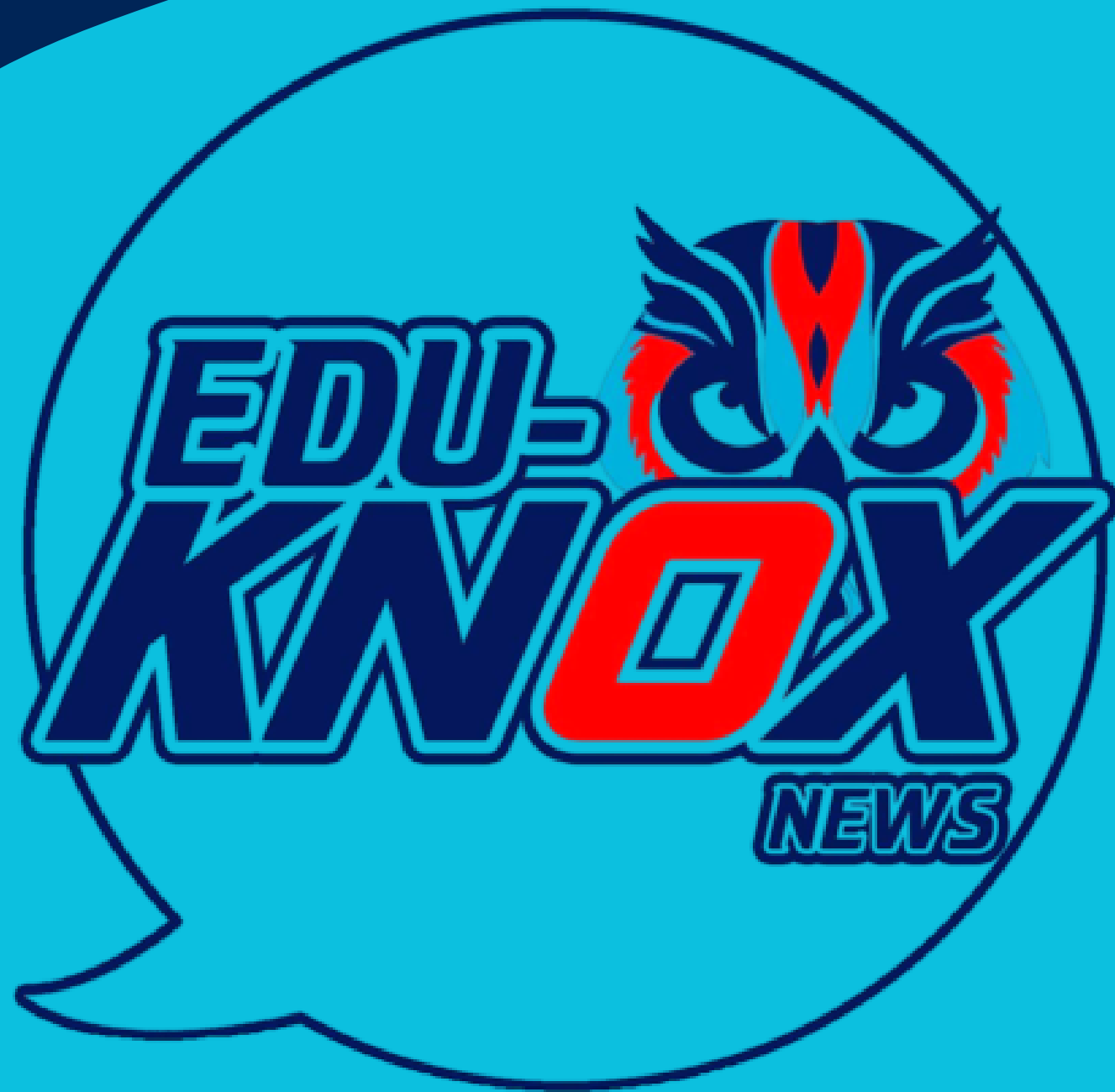


Can it be prevented?

Heart disease is preventable and manageable. Although you cannot change some risk factors, such as family history, there are some key prevention steps you can take.

By switching to a healthy lifestyle, you can avoid heart problems in the future. Eliminate stress from your life as much as possible, follow a healthy diet and get regular exercise, maintain a healthy weight, get enough sleep, go for regular health screenings, and 'know your numbers', that is, your blood pressure, sugar and cholesterol levels.





The Edu Knox Newsletter is a monthly publication sharing updates and important information to staff and students.



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